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AUTHOR Scott, W. Wayne
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ABSTRACT

A model is presented to help community college administrators coordinate efforts to achieve institutional objectives. Two kinds of objectives are discussed: (1) functional performance objectives, which entail maintaining predetermined standards of performance for the repetitive systems and functions of the college; and (2) change objectives, which involve change to improve the college. Performance objectives are characterized as involving process, and change objectives as involving project. The traditional functional organization, which fragments authority and work domains and separates functions without showing how they must be joined to achieve objectives, is seen as a major contributor to difficulties in achieving them. A successful strategy for meeting objectives, however, requires that employees from different functional areas combine their efforts. A two-dimensional objectives grid is then described; the matrix matches horizontal rows representing positions in the college with vertical columns representing objectives of the college. The areas where the rows intersect the columns identify the jobs and persons whose contributions are needed to achieve each objective, thereby making these functional relationships explicit. For change objectives, which are typically delegated to special project teams or agents that are appended to rather than a part of the functional organization, the objectives grid melds the appended groups and operating structures into one organization. (MB)

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MANAGEMENT BY OF OBJECTIVES AT

DEKALB COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Dr. W. Wayne Scott

President

DeKalb Community College

JC 790 083

MANAGEMENT BY OF OBJECTIVES AT
DEKALB COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"Structuring DeKalb College for its
Objectives Not Only Makes Them
Apparent but also Specifies
the Teams of Administrators
Required to carry them out."

In many community colleges, the Dean of Students does not concern him or herself with whether instructors are functioning well, and a divisional dean has little awareness of what level of performance is sought in registering students. Each department and the individuals who work in it have their own defined tasks to perform. If the objectives of a community college were as simple as achieving individual tasks, all would be well, but they are not. The work of a community college is not the sum of many individual tasks, but is instead the achieving of an array of specified objectives and these, whether they are ongoing or change objectives, usually require the coordinated contribution of several individuals in different departments. To help administrators see what efforts are required to achieve what objectives, the objectives and functions can be coordinated on a grid; the functions necessary to bring them about are made explicit by the grid, which then becomes the business of the College.

It is now two decades since Peter Drucker wrote The Practice of Management, and invented the phrase "management by objectives".

The usefulness of Drucker's observations seems totally obvious. The subject should have been almost wrung out by now. Yet the number of articles published since Drucker's book appeared, suggesting what to do and what to avoid in an MBO program, testifies that the results of many MBO programs have fallen short of the expectations that were originally entertained for them. I believe that if we consider "management by objectives" from the standpoint of organization, one or two additional insights can be developed that make MBO programs more successful.

"Organization", according to contemporary theory, is a strategy for achieving a specified purpose. If one's specified purpose, then, is to achieve objectives, the strategy selected would surely possess the following two qualifications:

(1) Recognizing that a single organization is probably not appropriate for every kind of objective, the strategy would distinguish among kinds of objectives.

(2) The strategy would recognize that one person's effort cannot achieve most objectives - and certainly cannot achieve the most important ones - but that coordinating contributions from several people are required to do the job.

It is easy to distinguish at least two kinds of objectives in organizations. The first is maintaining predetermined standards of performance from the repetitive systems and functions of the College. The second is bringing about changes to improve the College. For convenience, let us call the first "functional performance objectives" or "performance maintenance objectives", and the second "change objectives" or "improvement objectives".

An example makes this distinction clear. To maintain our evening enrollment at a planned level when the ability to achieve that level has already been demonstrated is a functional objective. To increase our evening enrollment to a level that has not yet been achieved is a change objective.

It should be evident that the strategy - and, therefore, the organization - for maintaining an evening enrollment performance objective will differ from the strategy and the organization for improving it. Maintaining a functional performance objective requires perhaps only that those making contributions to it adhere carefully to their duties and procedures.

On the other hand, to achieve a new level of performance requires some distinct cognitive and creative effort, plus, probably, some change in policy, procedure, personnel, authority or investment. So if the objective is to increase our evening enrollment to a higher level, a different set of contributions is needed, such as an analysis of past attendance records for

various courses offered; a community survey to determine what courses are needed; judgments as to what mode of new advertising is needed; or where to get new instructors that would have a high appeal to students.

Here in addition to the routine performance functions, mathematical analyses, advertising, and possibly general management may be involved in bringing the evening enrollment to a new high level. It is apparent, then, that a different organization, one which provides these contributions, is required to achieve change objectives.

One organizes differently, of course, not only for these two different kinds of objectives, but also for each and every objective itself. What is common to all the functional performance objectives is that the organization for each is more or less permanent, and that each is continually sought in a process of cooperation among functions. In contrast, what is common to all the change objectives is that the organizations which can bring them about are temporary until the new level has been achieved and demonstrated.

Performance objectives involve process; change objectives involve project.

The evening enrollment example illustrates that achieving an objective is seldom the result of a single person's contribution, but requires the cooperation of several functions: public relations, news releases, individual departments for course enrollment data, outside community agencies, etc.

Organizing is, therefore, much more complex than simply parceling out objectives, one-on-one, to various members of the organization. But failing to recognize the multi-functional aspect of objectives may explain some of the problems with conventional MBO programs.

Now let's look at the traditional organization strategy for meeting both functional and change objectives. Then I want to propose a different strategy that distinguishes between the two kinds of objectives and provides for the combinations of functions necessary to achieve them.

THE TRADITIONAL FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

The failure to recognize the limitations of the conventional functional organization as a strategy for achieving objectives, I believe, has contributed to the difficulties in achieving objectives. Briefly, let us see how the functional organization falls short of meeting the criteria of an adequate strategy for achieving objectives.

The functional organization is a strategy for operating the routine systems of the College - systems such as student admissions, academic advisement, instruction, and community service. It is a strategy that not only does not distinguish between kinds of objectives, but also does not distinguish between tasks and duties, on the one hand, and objectives, on the other. It is in fact a counterstrategy because it fragments work and separates functions without then showing

how they must be joined to achieve objectives.

The functional organization results from specializing the work - by dividing it into divisions, divisions into departments, departments into sections, and so on, each unit being a finer collection of tasks, activities, and functions, until at last every job is described. The whole effort is directed toward classifying, defining, and ranking jobs, duties, and functions. In short, the functional organization conceives the work of the College as consisting of a number of tasks and activities to be performed.

At the same time that it divides up the work, the functional organization divides up authority and territory. All authority is first vested in a board of trustees. From there, portions are parceled in diminishing amounts to the officers and management and down through the organization, by division, department, section, and individual. When the processes of delegating authority and allocating domain are complete, all the increments of delegated authority add up exactly to what was originally vested in the trustees, and the fragmented domains add up to the total activities of the College.

This total distribution of authority and domain handicaps the functional organization's strategy for achieving objectives in two ways. First, the fact that <u>all</u> the authority and domain are distributed, with nothing left over, implies that the functional organization is <u>the</u> organization, there is no other. The preeminence of this single organization diverts our atten-

tion from the many organizations, made up of combinations of functions, which achieve the total organization's objectives. Second, since everyone's authority and assigned domain come to him from his superiors in the line above, each person is oriented toward his or her section, department, and division.

The strategy for meeting objectives, however, requires that employees from different groups combine their functions. An employee's strong feeling of belo ging to his functional group obscures his necessary membership in these other organizations.

TWO-DIMENSIONAL ORGANIZATION

The functional organization is by itself an incomplete - and, therefore, insufficient - strategy for achieving objectives.

The task before us, therefore, is to complete the strategy of the functional organization for the purpose of managing and achieving the objectives of the College.

The simplest of ideas can help us here; it utilizes a grid as shown in Exhibit 1. The horizontal rows of the grid each represent a position in the College. The rows represent the entire Joint Cabinet. Indentations replace the pyramidal hierarchy. Each vertical column of the grid represents one of the objectives of the College. The blocks where the rows intersect the columns identify the jobs and persons whose contributions are needed to achieve each objective.

Exhibit I
The Objectives Grid (for the Joint Cabinet, developmental objectives)

	OBJECTIVES							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	n
PRESIDENT (Scott)		■						
Asst. to Pres. (Weatherly)	■							
VICE PRESIDENT (Thompson)		■	■					
VICE PRESIDENT (Adams)		■	■					
Academic Affairs (Davidson)		■						
Evening Dean (Hill)	■							
Student Affairs (Godwin)								
Occupational Dean (Mellinger)								
VICE PRESIDENT (Cole)		■	■					
Academic Affairs (F. Hill)								
Evening Dean (Plachy)	■							
Student Affairs (Cutchins)								

OBJECTIVE LEGEND

1. (example) Evening and Continuing Education Services will expand for the next academic year. This objective will be considered achieved when:
   (a) An increase of at least 10 percent has been achieved for the overall offerings in Continuing Education;
   (b) At least thirty industrial and business seminars are successfully completed by June 30, 1977;
   (c) At least twenty division and graduate courses are stimulated and coordinated through the College by surrounding colleges and universities;
   (d) At least twenty-five additional special courses related to hobby and leisure time activities have been successfully completed by June 30, 1977;
   (e) Evaluation of all the above offerings are rated by participants as at least 75 percent satisfactory.

Objectives to be developed within "grid" conference:

2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
n. _____

FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Assume first that the objectives arrayed vertically in Exhibit I are functional performance objectives. There is nothing new, of course, in having functional performance objectives, even if they are not called that. But in the usual MBO program, responsibility for meeting a given objective would probably be assigned to a particular individual and job. Developing an overall class schedule would probably be assigned to the Academic Dean or his counterpart; supervision of the Student Government Association would be assigned to the Dean of Students, and so on.

The truth is, however, that developing an overall class schedule requires that the instructional function join efforts with admissions and registration.

The combinations of functions that maintain the functional performance objectives are more or less permanent organizations - exactly as permanent, in fact, as the functional organization itself. The grid connects the functions that must cooperate for each performance objective and, by making these functional relationships explicit, completes the functional organization for the purpose of achieving the performance objective. The grid shows who works with whom, and to what end. The functional organization by itself does neither of these things.

The ideal, then, is never to draw a functional organization chart without showing the performance objective coor-

dinates of all functions in the chart. The composition of the teams accountable for the various functional performance objectives would then eventually become as well known to their members and others as the composition of the functional pyramid is now.

CHANGE OBJECTIVES

The same grid that organizes the teams for functional performance objectives also serves for change objectives - only now, of course, the vertical columns in Exhibit I list the change objectives.

Every college is in tension between the need to get the routine operations of the day done and the need to bring about the changes that will improve the College for tomorrow. The functional organization is a strategy for getting the repetitive tasks done. It is an awkward strategy, however, for doing the usually nonrepetitive tasks that are required if the College is to be changed and improved.

Management scientists and practitioners have employed two different organizational strategies to accomplish change within the functional organization. On the one hand, they have used the functional organization, but provided appendages to it, like assistants to the president, educational development officer, etc., to help bring about change. On the other hand, they have created separate organizations, typically called project management teams, which exist outside the

functional organization and live until the change project is completed.

The functional organization makes it difficult for either of these solutions, appended groups or project teams, to be effective.

APPENDED GROUPS

The groups appended to bring about change face the problem of all staff groups: how to get their ideas accepted and implemented. The purpose of the appended structures is to change things. These structures exist only because without them the functional organization accomplishes less change than desired. That, in turn, is because the members of the operating groups, whose functional contributions are also essential to the change objective, perceive their prime mission as operating the systems of the College. If effecting change is perceived at all as a responsibility, it only takes second place. The result of these differing priorities is to compromise the effort needed for accomplishing the change objectives.

In addition to there being differing priorities as to mission, the authority, responsibility, and accountability for effecting change are skewed in the functional organization. Conventionally, someone in the appended structure is assigned responsibility for the change objective and is held accountable for its accomplishment. But his mode must be persuasion -

for staff proposes, line disposes. The staff must carry the proposal up the organization in order to get the enforcing approvals, and implementation may be resisted or even thwarted by the operating groups.

The objectives grid melds the appended groups and operating structures into one organization and, by identifying the functions and individuals whose contributions are needed to meet the objective, implies that once a change objective has been adopted by the organization, then all parties needed to bring it about are equally responsible. With the objectives grid, there are no primary and secondary missions, only a selection of objectives, according to determined priorities. Authority is not preempted by convention but, to the extent necessary, is spelled out ad hoc.

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